

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3458

EXDIS

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: GRAHAM-LOW CONVERSATION WITH
 PRESIDENT KHAMA IN GABORONE

SUMMARY: WE HAD A USEFUL AND POSITIVE REVIEW OF THE
SITUATION WITH PRESIDENT KHAMA AND HIS SENIOR ADVISORS.
THEY HAVE PROPOSED TO SITHOLE'S DEPUTY GABELLAH A MEETING
BETWEEN THEMSELVES, SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA TO URGE
AN EARLY ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE. HAMA BELIEVES ONLY NKOMO
CAN HOLD THE COUNTRY TOGETHER AFTER INDEPNENCE BUT
HE DOES NOT SUPPORT THE PF'S EXTRME DEMANDS. THE CHIEF
PROBLEM THEY BELIEVE IS THE SECOND LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP IN
SALISBURY. END SUMMARY.

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1. WE MET WITH PRESIDENT KHAMA, VICE PRESIDENT MASIRE,
FOREIGN MINISTER MOGWE, PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORS STEENCAMP
AND LEGWAILA. GRAHAM AND I OUTLINED THE SITUATION TO DATE
IN SIMILAR TERMS TO THOSE USED IN DAR AND LUSAKA WITH OTHER
FRONTLINE GOVERNMENTS, BUT IN SOMEWHAT GREATER DETAIL.
GRAHAM SAID THERE WAS A POSSIBLITY WE COULD AGREE WITH

THE INTERNAL GROUP THAT WE SHOULD HAVE AS AN OBJECTIVE THE HOLDING OF A MEETING OF ALL PARTIES AT A HIGH LEVEL PROVIDED THAT THERE HAS BEEN SATISFACTORY PREPARATIONS AT LOWER LEVELS, WITH A MINIMUM OF PUBLICITY. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WOULD AGREE WITH THE PF THAT WE SHOULD ENTER INTO WORKING-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UK AND US AND ALL THE OTHER PARTIES PROVIDED THAT THESE TALKS HAVE AS THEIR OBJECTIVE THE HOLDING OF A MEETING OF ALL THE PARTIES AT A HIGH LEVEL.

2. PRESIDENT KHAMA NOTED THAT NKOMO AND MUZOREWA HAD RECENTLY VISITED GABORONE. HE ADDED THAT HIS PEOPLE HAD ALSO HELD TALKS WITH GABELLAH TO WHOM THEY HAD PROPOSED A MEETING WITH BOTH MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE. LEGWAILA FILLED US IN LATER WITH THE DETAILS. THE MEETING WITH GABELLAH HAD TAKEN PLACE AT JAN SMUTS AIRPORT ABOUT JUNE 11. HE AND MOGWE HAD TALKED ALL NIGHT BEFORE CONVINCING GABELLAH TO TRY TO GET THE TWO INTERNAL LEADERS TOGETHER WITH THE BOTSWANANS. THEY PRESSED GABELLAH HARD SAYING THAT EVEN IF THE PF WAS INTRANSIGENT, THE REST OF THE WORLD WOULD TAKE A MORE SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS IF THEY HAD TRIED TO ACCOMMODATE THE PF AND ACCEPTED TO GO TO A MEETING.

3. THE PRESIDENT AND HIS ADVISORS BELIEVE THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE PRESENT IMPASS IS THROUGH AN ALL PARTIES CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFERENCE WHICH TAKES PLACE SOON WHILE THE SITUATION IS STILL FLUID. THEY BLAME THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS' LIEUTENANTS (CHIKERAMA AND NYANDORO) FOR THEIR LEADERS FEAR OF A CONFERENCE AND ACCOMMODATION.

4. PRESIDENT KHAMA SAID THAT NYANDORO'S HOPE THAT THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WOULD COME OVER TO THE INTERNAL SIDE WAS UNREALISTIC AND HE MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT MUZOREWA, SITHOLE OR CHIRAU, IF INSTALLED AS HEAD OF AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT, COULD HOLD THE COUNTRY TOGETHER. ONLY NKOMO IS CAPABLE OF THAT.

5. THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT SUPPORTED A POSITION OF PARITY BETWEEN THE PF AND INTERNAL NATIONALISTS IN THE GOVERNING COUNCIL AND RESISTANCE TO PF DEMANDS FOR DOMINATION OF THE ARMY (SIC) AND POLICE, BUT RECOGNIZED LEGITIMACY IN THE PF'S DEMAND FOR A VISIBLE PRESENCE DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD.

6. MOGWE SAID THAT BYRON HOVE HAD TOLD HIM IN LONDON THAT MUZOREWA FEELS ISOLATED IN SALISBURY AGAINST SMITH, SITHOLE AND CHIRAU AND THAT HE WANTS NKOMO TO COME BACK.

CHIKERAMA IS THE STUMBLING BLOCK.

7. THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION OF THE POLICE ISSUE. MOGWE SUPPORTED "THREE MEN IN A JEEP" AS A COMPROMISE SOLUTION BUT MASIRE NOTED THAT THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS WOULD CONSIDER THAT AS BANDING AGAINST THEM SINCE THEY BELIEVE THE UN IS ON THE PF'S SIDE. WE POINTED OUT THE CONCEPT MIGHT WORK AS AN OBSERVER OR SUPERVISORY ELEMENT ATTACHED TO THE POLICE FORCE BUT THE LATTER SHOULD RETAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER.

8. WE DISCUSSED POSSIBLE CONFERENCE LOCATIONS. STEEN-CAMP RULED OUT CHOBE WHICH IS TOO SMALL AND NOW CLOSED DOWN WITH FURNITURE REMOVED. IF SECRET TALKS ARE TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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HELD THEY SUGGESTED TULI LODGE WHERE THEY BELIEVE TALKS COULD BE KEPT QUIET FOR QUITE A WHILE. IT HOLDS ABOUT 40 PEOPLE AND IS ON THE BORDER BETWEEN RHODESIA, SOUTH AFRICA AND BOTSWANA. IT ONLY TAKES SMALL PLANES. GABORONE IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY.

9. STEENCAMP RAISED THE PROBLEM OF REFUGEES SAYING THEY HAD EVIDENCE THE PF WAS CONTINUING TO STIMULATE THE EXODUS. AT LEAST 25,000 MILITARY AGE ADULTS HAVE TRANSITED BOTSWANA AND THERE ARE ABOUT 7,000 MORE STILL IN THE COUNTRY. WAS NKOMO CONSIDERING A CONVENTIONAL TYPE WAR?
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